

Exhibit 42

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
 Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate  
 5900 Capital Gateway Drive  
 Camp Springs, MD 20588



U.S. Citizenship  
 and Immigration  
 Services

## Nicaragua: Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Country of Origin Information (COI) Considerations<sup>1</sup>

### Overview

Nicaragua is a low-income country of approximately seven million people that has a food-deficit even though approximately 30% of the population is employed in the agricultural sector.<sup>2</sup> According to the World Food Programme (WFP), Nicaragua “is constantly exposed to hazards such as droughts, floods, hurricanes, storms, volcanic eruptions and slow-onset events, which are aggravated by environmental degradation.”<sup>3</sup> The most recent tropical storm to strike Nicaragua was Tropical Storm Sara on November 14, 2024, which impacted 50 municipalities, affecting 5,000 people and resulting in the flooding of hundreds of homes.<sup>4</sup> While Nicaragua was struck by Hurricane Mitch, a category 5 storm, in October 1998 and was one of the hardest hit countries in the region, at the time of this reporting, no information regarding any potentially ongoing impacts of the 1998 Hurricane Mitch was accessible or known to be available.

According to a report from February 2024, “The rule of law collapsed [in 2018] as the government moved to put down the movement, with rights monitors reporting killings, extrajudicial detentions, disappearances, and torture.”<sup>5</sup> On the sixth anniversary of the outbreak of social protests in Nicaragua, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) reported in mid-April 2024 that “state repression against dissident voices has persisted under different guises and levels of intensity,” with Nicaragua having become “a police state” and the country’s “political, social and human rights crisis” continuing “to deepen.”<sup>6</sup> In mid-September

<sup>1</sup> The reporting period for this report is February 8, 2023, to March 19, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Nicaragua, World Food Programme, available at: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/nicaragua> (last visited April 10, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> Nicaragua country strategic plan (2024–2029), World Food Programme (WFP), May 13, 2024, pg. 3, available at: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?\\_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> Marlon González, La tormenta tropical Sara se disipa y deja cuatro muertos y un remanente de lluvias en Centroamérica, The Associated Press, updated Nov. 18, 2024, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/tormenta-tropical-sara-honduras-muertos-lluvias-centroamerica-6280188f0024cb3fb29fd01c31c699f1> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025); La tormenta tropical Sara deja cuatro muertos en Honduras y Nicaragua, Agence France-Presse (AFP), Nov. 19, 2024, available at: <https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/tormenta-tropical-sara-deja-cuatro-muertos-en-honduras-y-nicaragua/88215935> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Freedom in the World 2024 – Nicaragua, Freedom House, Feb. 29, 2024, available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/nicaragua/freedom-world/2024> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>6</sup> Nicaragua: Six years after social protests, IACHR urges reestablishment of democracy, end to repression and impunity, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 18, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

2024, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua stated that the human rights situation in the country had “dramatically worsened since last year, with the Government continuing to facilitate, coordinate and execute serious human rights violations and abuses.”<sup>7</sup> In February 2025, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua stated that the Nicaraguan government had “dismantled the last remaining checks on its power, systematically executing a strategy to cement total control of the country through severe human rights violations.”<sup>8</sup> It also noted that “the regime of President Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo, has deliberately transformed the country into an authoritarian State where no independent institutions remain, opposition voices are silenced, and the population – both inside and outside Nicaragua – faces persecution, forced exile, and economic retaliation.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Environmental Conditions**

The WFP reported in mid-May 2024, “Between 1998 and 2020, 38 extreme hydrometeorological events were recorded” in Nicaragua, “including El Niño and La Niña phenomena, which caused floods or droughts resulting in heavy material losses.”<sup>10</sup> Nicaragua was struck by Hurricane Mitch, a category 5 storm, in October 1998 and was one of the hardest hit countries in the region, suffering “3,800 dead.”<sup>11</sup> At the time of this reporting, no information regarding any potentially ongoing impacts of the 1998 Hurricane Mitch was accessible or known to be available.

Nicaragua has historically “been impacted by tropical cyclones.”<sup>12</sup> The country’s “Caribbean coast, which has a large number of Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, is frequently hit by hurricanes and tropical storms.”<sup>13</sup> On November 14, 2024, Tropical Storm Sara “made landfall [...] near the Honduras-Nicaragua border.”<sup>14</sup> Tropical Storm Sara impacted 50

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<sup>9</sup> Nicaragua’s deepening repression: UN experts call for urgent global action, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Feb. 26, 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/02/nicaraguas-deepening-repression-un-experts-call-urgent-global-action> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> Nicaragua country strategic plan (2024–2029), World Food Programme (WFP), May 13, 2024, pg. 3, available at: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?\\_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>11</sup> Luis Guillermo Solís, Central America Is Still Recovering from Hurricane Mitch, Americas Quarterly, May 3, 2022, available at: <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/central-america-is-still-recovering-from-hurricane-mitch/> (last visited Apr. 10, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> Nicaragua: Anticipatory Actions for Tropical Storms, DREF N° MDRNI012 - Final Report, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Apr. 6, 2023, pg. 1, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/nicaragua-anticipatory-actions-tropical-storms-dref-ndeg-mdrni012-final-report> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>13</sup> Nicaragua country strategic plan (2024–2029), World Food Programme (WFP), May 13, 2024, pg. 3, available at: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?\\_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Central America: Tropical Storm Sara - Flash Update No. 2 (as of 18 November 2024), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Nov. 18, 2024, pg. 1, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/central-america-tropical-storm-sara-flash-update-no-2-18-november-2024> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

municipalities in Nicaragua, and two deaths were reported.<sup>15</sup> In addition, 5,000 people were affected and “some 1,800 homes flooded due to the flooding of 25 rivers.”<sup>16</sup>

Nicaragua was impacted by Hurricane Julia—a category 1 storm—in early October 2022.<sup>17</sup> Per the WFP, Hurricane Julia “directly and indirectly” impacted “nearly 4 million people (60 percent of the population) and 60 percent of the territory,” and “resulted in economic losses amounting to approximately 2.4 percent of Nicaragua’s GDP.”<sup>18</sup> The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) reported in April 2023 that Julia “left major damage” in Nicaragua:

[...] Julia caused heavy rainfall, which in turn caused several rivers to overflow, including the Artiwas, Wasminona and Okonwas rivers in the municipality of Rosita, the Malacatoya and Fonseca rivers, Siquia, Mico and Rama, among others, putting the population at risk and damaging social infrastructure such as housing, roads and telecommunications in the South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS), Central Zelaya and Boaco, interruption of electricity and drinking] water services, obstruction of roads due to falling trees, among others.

According to preliminary data released by SINPARED, Julia left major damage. Around 20,000 people were evacuated from the areas of greatest impact and risk, some 15,000 houses were affected to varying degrees, of which almost 700 were totally destroyed and more than 8,000 were affected, mainly with damage to their roofs. There were also reports of 98 health units affected in their infrastructure, including a regional hospital. [...]

One of the areas most affected was the municipality of El Rama in the South Caribbean, where three rivers converge: Siquia, Mico and Rama, adding to the more than 70 rivers that overflowed nationwide as a result of the rains, leaving villages under water and entire families lost all their belongings.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Marlon González, La tormenta tropical Sara se disipa y deja cuatro muertos y un remanente de lluvias en Centroamérica, The Associated Press, updated Nov. 18, 2024, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/tormenta-tropical-sara-honduras-muertos-lluvias-centroamerica-6280188f0024cb3fb29fd01c31c699f1> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>16</sup> La tormenta tropical Sara deja cuatro muertos en Honduras y Nicaragua, Agence France-Presse (AFP), Nov. 19, 2024, available at: <https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/tormenta-tropical-sara-deja-cuatro-muertos-en-honduras-y-nicaragua/88215935> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>17</sup> Nicaragua: Anticipatory Actions for Tropical Storms, DREF N° MDRNI012 - Final Report, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Apr. 6, 2023, pg. 2, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/nicaragua-anticipatory-actions-tropical-storms-dref-ndeg-mdrni012-final-report> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>18</sup> Leticia Gonçalves, Kathryn Milliken, Nicholas Grainger, and Eliseo Arauz, Sovereign disaster risk financing: Linking insurance & other disaster risk finance tools to social protection system in Central America and the Caribbean, World Food Programme (WFP), Aug. 2023, pg. 4, available at: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/sovereign-disaster-risk-financing-linking-insurance-other-disaster-risk-finance-tools> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>19</sup> Nicaragua: Anticipatory Actions for Tropical Storms, DREF N° MDRNI012 - Final Report, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Apr. 6, 2023, pg. 2, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/nicaragua-anticipatory-actions-tropical-storms-dref-ndeg-mdrni012-final-report> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

In its country report covering 2023, the WFP noted, “Although Hurricane Julia hit the Caribbean coast in October 2022, the scale of damages caused to infrastructure and livelihoods required assistance throughout 2023.”<sup>20</sup>

The Dry Corridor in Nicaragua “covers 44 municipalities primarily dedicated to agricultural activities, mainly the production of basic grains for the national market and self-consumption.”<sup>21</sup> According to the WFP, “The area is characterized by irregular rainfall distribution with alternating drought and heavy rains generating landslides and floods.”<sup>22</sup> The WFP reported in August 2023 that the Dry Corridor was “one of the regions with the highest prevalence of food insecurity in the country.”<sup>23</sup>

The WFP stated in mid-May 2024 that El Niño was “currently active.”<sup>24</sup> In mid-October 2023, OCHA reported, “In Nicaragua, an estimated 50 per cent of crops have already been affected by drought conditions brought on by El Niño.”<sup>25</sup>

### Social and Political Considerations

In its annual report on human rights in Nicaragua (covering 2023), the U.S. Department of State noted that during the year: “Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings, including extrajudicial killings; enforced disappearance; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by prison guards and parapolice [...].”<sup>26</sup> The U.S. Department of State further noted in its 2023 report:

Parapolice – nonuniformed, armed, and masked units with marginal tactical training and loose hierarchy that acted in coordination with government security forces and reported

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<sup>20</sup> Nicaragua Annual Country Report 2023 - Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024, World Food Programme (WFP), Apr. 2, 2024, pg. 3, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/nicaragua-annual-country-report-2023-country-strategic-plan-2019-2024> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>21</sup> Nicaragua country strategic plan (2024–2029), World Food Programme (WFP), May 13, 2024, pg. 3, available at: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?\\_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>22</sup> Nicaragua country strategic plan (2024–2029), World Food Programme (WFP), May 13, 2024, pg. 3, available at: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?\\_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>23</sup> Letícia Gonçalves, Kathryn Milliken, Nicholas Grainger, and Eliseo Arauz, Sovereign disaster risk financing: Linking insurance & other disaster risk finance tools to social protection system in Central America and the Caribbean, World Food Programme (WFP), Aug. 2023, pg. 4, available at: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/sovereign-disaster-risk-financing-linking-insurance-other-disaster-risk-finance-tools> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>24</sup> Nicaragua country strategic plan (2024–2029), World Food Programme (WFP), May 13, 2024, pg. 3, available at: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?\\_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000157532/download/?_ga=2.122183627.1775531770.1731961750-1448719734.1731961750) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>25</sup> Latin America & The Caribbean Weekly Situation Update (As of 10 October 2023), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Oct. 10, 2023, pg. 2, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/latin-america-caribbean-weekly-situation-update-10-october-2023> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>26</sup> 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nicaragua, U.S. Department of State, Apr. 23, 2024, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/nicaragua/> (last visited Apr. 9, 2025).

directly to the Nicaraguan National Police – and individuals linked to the government of President Daniel Ortega Saavedra carried out a campaign of harassment, intimidation, and violence toward perceived enemies of the regime, such as former political prisoners and their families, farmworker activists, prodemocracy opposition groups, human rights defenders, private-sector leaders, and clergy, other religious actors, and church-affiliated civil society groups. Authorities did not investigate or prosecute these actions.<sup>27</sup>

The following sources discuss the consolidation of the branches of government by President Daniel Ortega. According to the IACHR, Nicaragua’s “democratic system has been eroded” since 1999 via “a series of legal reforms and other political actions that gradually led the Head of the Executive Branch to establish partisan control of all democratic institutions, silence political opposition, concentrate public power, and reduce the environment for civic participation of civil society.”<sup>28</sup> In its annual report covering 2024, Freedom House noted that the “election of Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega” in 2006 “began a period of democratic deterioration marked by the consolidation of all branches of government under his party’s control, the limitation of fundamental freedoms, and unchecked corruption in government.”<sup>29</sup>

Per the IACHR, the outbreak of social protests which started on April 18, 2018, “spontaneously exposed the social discontent that had built up over several years, in the face of the institutional processes that had gradually restricted citizen expression, co-opted public institutions and led to a concentration of state power in the hands of the executive branch.”<sup>30</sup> The Nicaraguan state responded to this “expression of social dissent” with “the use of violence.”<sup>31</sup> The IACHR reported in mid-April 2024—on the sixth anniversary of the outbreak of social protests in the country, “The repressive and violent state response resulted in the deaths of at least 355 people, injuries to more than 2,000 people and the arbitrary detention of more than 2,000 people.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nicaragua, U.S. Department of State, Apr. 23, 2024, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/nicaragua/> (last visited Apr. 9, 2025).

<sup>28</sup> Closure of civic space in Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Sep. 23, 2023, pg. 11, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2023/Cierre\\_espacio\\_civico\\_Nicaragua\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2023/Cierre_espacio_civico_Nicaragua_ENG.pdf) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>29</sup> Freedom in the World 2025 - Nicaragua, Freedom House, Feb. 26, 2025, available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/nicaragua/freedom-world/2025> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>30</sup> Annual Report 2023 - Chapter IV.B - Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 25, 2024, pg. 675, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023\\_Cap\\_4B\\_Nicaragua\\_ENG.PDF](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023_Cap_4B_Nicaragua_ENG.PDF) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>31</sup> Annual Report 2023 - Chapter IV.B - Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 25, 2024, pg. 675, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023\\_Cap\\_4B\\_Nicaragua\\_ENG.PDF](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023_Cap_4B_Nicaragua_ENG.PDF) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>32</sup> Nicaragua: Six years after social protests, IACHR urges reestablishment of democracy, end to repression and impunity, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 18, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).



In late February 2025, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua reported that it had “identified four main phases of repression since April 2018.”<sup>33</sup> As the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua noted:

The first phase (2018-2020) was characterized by a violent and disproportionate crackdown on widespread legitimate protests, revealing a repressive impulse and an initial lack of preparedness to address social discontent and demands [...]. The second phase (2021) was defined by intensified targeted repression, especially arbitrary detentions and groundless prosecutions, to ensure President Ortega’s re-election [...]. In the third phase (2022), the Government redoubled efforts to eliminate all remnants of political opposition in the lead up to the November municipal elections [...].

The fourth phase (2023-present) is characterized by measures aimed at eliminating all criticism and cementing the executive’s absolute control over all State entities and the population. Authorities expelled or barred hundreds of Nicaraguans from entering the country and arbitrarily deprived hundreds of their nationality. The authorities further dismantled civic space by cancelling the legal status of hundreds more non-profit organizations. They accelerated the confiscation of assets of real or perceived opponents, their relatives, non-profit organizations and private universities. The systematic targeted repression of perceived opponents continued, including surveillance, harassment, arbitrary detentions, unfair trials and enforced disappearances. The authorities formalized their control through constitutional and legislative reforms. This culminated with a broad constitutional reform, in force since February 2025, which undermined fundamental rights protection and put almost unlimited powers in the hands of the presidency.<sup>34</sup>

In mid-April 2024, the IACHR referenced “Nicaragua’s transformation into a police state, where the Executive has installed a regime of terror, through the control and surveillance of the citizenry and repression through state and parastatal security institutions.”<sup>35</sup> When discussing its most recent annual report (covering 2023), the IACHR referred to “the radicalization of state repression...through the continued prohibition of protests and demonstrations, the dismantling of media outlets, the massive closure of civil society organizations, universities and study centers, and the persecution and criminalization of members of the Catholic Church.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 24, 2025, pg. 2, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/grhe-nicaragua/a-hrc-58-26-auv-en.pdf> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>34</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 24, 2025, pg. 2-3, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/grhe-nicaragua/a-hrc-58-26-auv-en.pdf> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>35</sup> Nicaragua: Six years after social protests, IACHR urges reestablishment of democracy, end to repression and impunity, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 18, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>36</sup> Nicaragua: Six years after social protests, IACHR urges reestablishment of democracy, end to repression and impunity, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 18, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

Likewise, in an early September 2024 report—covering the period from June 15, 2023, to June 15, 2024—the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported on Government of Nicaragua efforts “that further the shrinking of civic and democratic space and expand the control of the Government over all public institutions, including administrative, judicial, political, academic and cultural institutions.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua stated in early September 2024, “Arbitrary detentions, torture and ill-treatment, and the instrumentalization of criminal law to eliminate any opposition, real, potential or perceived as such, continue,” with victims “forced to choose between prison and leaving the country.”<sup>38</sup> The U.S. State Department also stated that in 2023:

There were numerous reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings, including extrajudicial killings, during the year. Human rights organizations and independent media alleged some killings were politically motivated, an allegation difficult to confirm because the government refused to conduct official inquiries.<sup>39</sup>

In late February 2025, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua reported that, in January 2025, Nicaragua’s National Assembly:

unanimously approved, in second reading, a far-reaching constitutional reform which legalizes and consolidates the executive’s monopoly on power. This reform formalizes the de facto dissolution of separation, independence and mutual control between branches of the State. It creates two “Co-Presidents” who constitute the presidency.<sup>40</sup>

Commenting on this constitutional reform—which went into effect on February 18, 2025—*The Associated Press* noted in late February 2025 that “it effectively put all branches of government under the power of the presidency, and also officially made Ortega and Murillo ‘co-presidents,’ which would guarantee presidential succession for Murillo and their family.”<sup>41</sup> The media outlet

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<sup>37</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 2, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>38</sup> Nicaragua’s people defenseless in face of grave human rights violations, UN Group of Experts says, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 10, 2024, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/nicaraguas-people-defenseless-face-grave-human-rights-violations-un-group> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>39</sup> 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nicaragua, U.S. Department of State, Apr. 23, 2024, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/nicaragua/> (last visited Apr. 9, 2025).

<sup>40</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 24, 2025, pg. 4, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/grhe-nicaragua/a-hrc-58-26-auv-en.pdf> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>41</sup> Nicaraguan government is cementing total control of the state and violating rights, UN experts warn, *The Associated Press*, Feb. 26, 2025, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-nicaragua-democracy-ortega-murillo-constitution-75b7e8a05ea68c783999007754657810> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).



also reported that the reform “expanded the presidential term to six years from five in a move that further consolidated the family’s firm grip on power.”<sup>42</sup>

According to OHCHR, “There has been a systematic effort to dismantle civil society organizations” in Nicaragua.<sup>43</sup> The IACHR stated in a late September 2023 report, “The cancellation of the legal status of thousands of Nicaraguan civil society organizations illustrates the most drastic pattern of the State’s attacks on pluralism, as well as its intention to completely close civic and democratic space in Nicaragua.”<sup>44</sup> The Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI)’s objective is to “Monitor the human rights situation in Nicaragua, in accordance with the scope and mandate of the IACHR itself.”<sup>45</sup> In late August 2024, the IACHR reported, “Since the beginning of the human rights crisis in Nicaragua, the Special Follow-up Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) has recorded the closure of more than 5,000 civil society organizations by the State, including more than 1,200 religious foundations.”<sup>46</sup> The IACHR also noted that, as of August 22, 2024, over 1,600 organizations had their legal status cancelled during the year, with most of these organizations also experiencing “the confiscation and illegitimate appropriation of assets.”<sup>47</sup>

According to Human Rights Watch, “Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples” in Nicaragua “face discrimination, reflected in disproportionate poverty rates, illegal encroachment on their traditional territories, and persistent violence.”<sup>48</sup> In mid-April 2024, the IACHR stated that it had:

been denouncing the intensification of repression against indigenous and Afro-descendant critics of the government, as well as the holding of regional elections in the Caribbean Coast in a serious context of armed attacks against these communities, the dispossession of their territories and natural resources, police

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<sup>42</sup> Nicaraguan government is cementing total control of the state and violating rights, UN experts warn, The Associated Press, Feb. 26, 2025, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-nicaragua-democracy-ortega-murillo-constitution-75b7e8a05ea68c783999007754657810> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>43</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 3, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>44</sup> Closure of civic space in Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Sep. 23, 2023, pg. 29, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2023/Cierre\\_espacio\\_civico\\_Nicaragua\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2023/Cierre_espacio_civico_Nicaragua_ENG.pdf) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>45</sup> Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI), Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), available at: <https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/meseni/default.asp#:~:text=On%20June%2024%2C%202018%2C%20at,Gross%20Human%20Rights%20Violations%20in> (last visited Apr. 10, 2025).

<sup>46</sup> IACHR condemns massive closure of civil society and religious organizations in Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Aug. 22, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/189.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/189.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>47</sup> IACHR condemns massive closure of civil society and religious organizations in Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Aug. 22, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/189.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/189.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>48</sup> World Report 2024 - Nicaragua, Human Rights Watch, Jan. 11, 2024, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/nicaragua> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

siege, militarization, arrests of indigenous leaders, the proven absence of an independent electoral system and other facts that put their ethnic and cultural survival at risk.<sup>49</sup>

In its annual report covering 2023, the IACHR stated that it had “received reports of new attacks against different peoples of the Caribbean coast by armed settlers acting with the acquiescence of state authorities, which were part of a systematic pattern.”<sup>50</sup> Likewise, OHCHR reported in early September 2024 that it “continued to receive reports of violence in territories inhabited by Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.”<sup>51</sup>

In early October 2023, Nicaragua’s Supreme Electoral Council arbitrarily cancelled the legal status of Yapti Tasba Masraka Nanih Asla Takanka (YATAMA), an Indigenous and Afrodescendent political party.<sup>52</sup> The Nicaraguan police had previously “detained two of YATAMA’s main leaders” in late September 2023.<sup>53</sup> In early March 2024, “regional elections were held in the North and South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions, where most of the Indigenous and Afrodescendent population of Nicaragua resides.”<sup>54</sup> OHCHR reported in early September 2024 that the “right to take part in the conduct of public affairs was severely restricted throughout the electoral process.”<sup>55</sup>

### Freedom of Religion

In its annual report on religious freedom in Nicaragua (covering 2023), the U.S. Department of State noted that the U.S. Secretary of State designated Nicaragua “a Country of Particular

<sup>49</sup> Nicaragua: Six years after social protests, IACHR urges reestablishment of democracy, end to repression and impunity, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 18, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>50</sup> Annual Report 2023 - Chapter IV.B - Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 25, 2024, pg. 680, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023\\_Cap\\_4B\\_Nicaragua\\_ENG.PDF](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023_Cap_4B_Nicaragua_ENG.PDF) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>51</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 11, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>52</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 2, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025); Nicaragua: IACHR warns international community about lack of conditions for free and fair elections in autonomous regions of the Caribbean Coast, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Feb. 23, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/preleases/2024/040.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2024/040.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>53</sup> World Report 2024 - Nicaragua, Human Rights Watch, Jan. 11, 2024, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/nicaragua> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>54</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 2, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>55</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 2, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

Concern for having engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom.”<sup>56</sup> In a March 2025 report on religious freedom, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, stated:

The government continued to employ a variety of tactics to intimidate Christian worshipers and impede their peaceful religious practices. It arbitrarily prohibited many religious observances and processions, including deploying approximately 4,000 police officers to Catholic churches around the country in March to prevent public Holy Week processions.<sup>57</sup>

In mid-February 2024, *The Associated Press* reported on the “ongoing crackdown” in Nicaragua “on the Catholic Church in particular but not sparing evangelicals.”<sup>58</sup> In a late September 2023 report, the IACHR discussed religious freedom in Nicaragua, noting:

The closure of civic and democratic space in Nicaragua has included restrictions on freedom of religion through the prohibition of religious celebrations, criminalization of religious services, closure of religious media, confiscation of property and bank accounts, expulsion of religious orders, and other acts of repression and retaliation against members of the Catholic Church due to their role as mediators in the National Dialogue in 2018, and their critical role in denouncing human rights violations.<sup>59</sup>

In mid-August 2024, the IACHR reported that the Nicaraguan state had closed over 1,200 religious foundations since the start of the country’s human right crisis in 2018.<sup>60</sup> As OHCHR reported, in August 2023, the Nicaraguan government “cancelled arbitrarily the legal status of Universidad Centroamericana, a Jesuit university, where many Nicaraguan human rights defenders have pursued their education, and confiscated its assets, facilities and bank accounts, stating that it was a terrorist training centre.”<sup>61</sup> Human Rights Watch noted in its annual report covering 2023, “Authorities also banned the 2023 Easter processions and closed the Jesuit

<sup>56</sup> 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nicaragua, U.S. Department of State, June 26, 2024, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/nicaragua/> (last visited Apr. 9, 2025).

<sup>57</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2025 Annual Report, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), Mar. 25, 2025, pp. 26-27, available at: <https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/2025%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report.pdf> (last visited Apr. 9, 2025).

<sup>58</sup> Giovanna Dell'Orto, Nicaragua’s crackdown on Catholic Church spreads fear among the faithful, there and in exile, *The Associated Press*, updated Feb. 11, 2024, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/nicaragua-catholic-church-crackdown-exile-vatican-us-ortega-ddcbe3f439ea0773dc9e1db88a7bb952> (last visited Apr. 2, 2025).

<sup>59</sup> Closure of civic space in Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Sep. 23, 2023, pg. 8, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2023/Cierre\\_espacio\\_civico\\_Nicaragua\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2023/Cierre_espacio_civico_Nicaragua_ENG.pdf) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>60</sup> IACHR condemns massive closure of civil society and religious organizations in Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Aug. 22, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/189.asp&utm\\_content=countr y-nic&utm\\_term=class-mon](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/189.asp&utm_content=countr y-nic&utm_term=class-mon) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>61</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 5, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

religious order in August, confiscating its properties. They also continued to expel foreign priests and nuns.”<sup>62</sup>

### Return to Nicaragua

Nicaragua’s net migration rate for 2024 was estimated to be 1.8 migrants per 1,000 population.<sup>63</sup> In late December 2023, *Reuters* reported that “1.5 million Nicaraguans now live outside their home country, or about 22% of the country's population, according to U.N. data analyzed by Dialogo Interamericano researcher Manuel Orozco.”<sup>64</sup> In mid-April 2024, the IACHR stated that “the continuation of arbitrary detentions, the permanent threat of criminalization, and a climate of persecution and surveillance against the civilian population” in Nicaragua had “forced thousands of people to move to other countries.”<sup>65</sup> In late February 2024, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua reported that, per the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “between 2018 and June 2023, 935,065 people had left Nicaragua; among them 874,641 were asylum seekers and 60,424 had obtained refugee status.”<sup>66</sup> The Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua also stated, “The number of Nicaraguans having fled the country since 2018 corresponds to almost one in eight of the Nicaraguan population.”<sup>67</sup>

Nicaraguan authorities have “arbitrarily stripped” certain individuals of their nationality, “rendering stateless those who did not possess other nationalities.”<sup>68</sup> In February 2023, the Nicaraguan government “stripped 317 people of their nationality, including 222 political prisoners the government expelled to the US, labeling them as ‘traitors’ and confiscating their assets.”<sup>69</sup> The 317 individuals included “the country’s main social, political and religious leaders; former officials and diplomats; renowned human rights defenders; and journalists and

<sup>62</sup> World Report 2024 - Nicaragua, Human Rights Watch, Jan. 11, 2024, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/nicaragua> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>63</sup> The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Apr. 9, 2025, available at: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/nicaragua/> (last visited: April 10, 2025).

<sup>64</sup> Remittances from Nicaraguan migrants mark new record, passing \$4 billion, *Reuters*, Dec. 27, 2023, available at: [https://www.westlaw.com/Document/Iac36a2a0a51011ee86eeb734a53a11cd/View/FullText.html?transitionType=Default&contextData=\(sc.Default\)&VR=3.0&RS=cblt1.0](https://www.westlaw.com/Document/Iac36a2a0a51011ee86eeb734a53a11cd/View/FullText.html?transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)&VR=3.0&RS=cblt1.0) (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>65</sup> Nicaragua: Six years after social protests, IACHR urges reestablishment of democracy, end to repression and impunity, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 18, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>66</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 28, 2024, pg. 7, available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/A\\_HRC\\_55\\_27\\_AdvanceUneditedVersion1\\_0.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/A_HRC_55_27_AdvanceUneditedVersion1_0.pdf) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>67</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 28, 2024, pg. 7, available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/A\\_HRC\\_55\\_27\\_AdvanceUneditedVersion1\\_0.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/A_HRC_55_27_AdvanceUneditedVersion1_0.pdf) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>68</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 10, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>69</sup> World Report 2024 - Nicaragua, Human Rights Watch, Jan. 11, 2024, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/nicaragua> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

workers of the main media outlets.”<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, in early September 2024, Nicaragua released from prison 135 people—who, per the IACHR, were considered government opponents and had been arbitrarily detained—and expelled them from the country.<sup>71</sup> Five days after their release, “the Nicaraguan Supreme Court revoked the Nicaraguan nationality of these individuals and ordered the confiscation of their assets.”<sup>72</sup>

The IACHR has reported on the existence of “an arbitrary policy to prevent the free entry or exit of the country of the population.”<sup>73</sup> In its annual report covering 2023, the IACHR stated:

In 2023, the Commission observed the tightening of an arbitrary policy that prevented the free entry into or exit from the country, which consisted of the arbitrary withdrawal and retention of passports, as well as the refusal to issue passports as a mechanism to prevent people from leaving the country. The Commission has also documented cases of Nicaraguans not being allowed to return to their country, which led them to undergo forced displacement and to seek the regularization of their migratory status or the access to international protection mechanisms in other countries. Some people who were arbitrarily prevented by the State from returning to their country of origin reported that they were unable to renew expired passports or access other identity documents because they were outside the country and because of the State’s refusal to issue said documentation. These policies resulted in the forced separation of many Nicaraguan families.<sup>74</sup>

In its late February 2024 report, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua discussed entry bans for Nicaraguans, noting, “The Group documented 145 cases of Nicaraguans banned from entering the country. The denial of entering one’s own country is a pattern of violation

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<sup>70</sup> Annual Report 2023 - Chapter IV.B - Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 25, 2024, pg. 676, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023\\_Cap\\_4B\\_Nicaragua\\_ENG.PDF](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023_Cap_4B_Nicaragua_ENG.PDF) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>71</sup> IACHR condemns arbitrary revocation of nationality of 135 recently released prisoners in Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Sep. 13, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/217.asp&utm\\_content=country-nic&utm\\_term=class-mon](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/217.asp&utm_content=country-nic&utm_term=class-mon) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025); Gabriela Selser, Nicaragua strips citizenship from 135 prisoners released to Guatemala, The Associated Press, updated Sep. 10, 2024, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/nicaragua-daniel-ortega-citizenship-political-prisoners-expropriation-c37c6e65cc4c6c97596d37d77709de68> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>72</sup> IACHR condemns arbitrary revocation of nationality of 135 recently released prisoners in Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Sep. 13, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/217.asp&utm\\_content=country-nic&utm\\_term=class-mon](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/217.asp&utm_content=country-nic&utm_term=class-mon) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>73</sup> Nicaragua: Six years after social protests, IACHR urges reestablishment of democracy, end to repression and impunity, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 18, 2024, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/075.asp) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>74</sup> Annual Report 2023 – Chapter IV.B - Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Apr. 25, 2024, pg. 679, available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023\\_Cap\\_4B\\_Nicaragua\\_ENG.PDF](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2023/chapters/IA2023_Cap_4B_Nicaragua_ENG.PDF) (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).



that Nicaraguan authorities have increasingly relied on, especially since 2023.”<sup>75</sup> In its early September 2024 report, OHCHR noted, “During the reporting period [...] OHCHR documented 62 cases of Nicaraguan nationals (33 women and 29 men) who were denied entry into their own country.”<sup>76</sup> OHCHR also posited that “the total number of persons facing that situation could be higher due to significant underreporting.”<sup>77</sup>

In its late February 2025 report, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua stated:

During this reporting period, the Group has continued to document cases of Nicaraguans who were prohibited entry into the country. [...] The Group obtained information confirming that the instructions to deny Nicaraguans entry into their own country came from the General Directorate for Migration and Alien Affairs, following direct orders from the Vice-Minister of the Interior. In November 2024, the National Assembly adopted Act No. 1228, which gives the Directorate competence to restrict entry into the country to nationals deemed a threat to sovereignty or public order.<sup>78</sup>

### **Freedom of Movement**

When discussing freedom of movement in its annual report covering 2024, Freedom House reported, “The 2018 repression against protesters, the 2021 crackdown on political opponents, and continued surveillance and harassment at the hands of police and paramilitary groups have created a climate of fear and mistrust that discourages free movement. Poor infrastructure limits free movement in some majority-Indigenous areas.”<sup>79</sup> In its annual report on human rights in Nicaragua (covering 2023), the U.S. Department of State noted that in many cases, “police restricted the movement of political opponents outside their homes, although the individuals did not have pending charges against them or judicially imposed restrictions on their movement.”<sup>80</sup> In its late February 2025 report, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua discussed the surveillance of the population:

During this reporting period, the Group was able to identify the existence of a wide

<sup>75</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 28, 2024, pg. 7, available at:

[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/A\\_HRC\\_55\\_27\\_AdvanceUneditedVersion1\\_0.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/A_HRC_55_27_AdvanceUneditedVersion1_0.pdf) (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>76</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 10, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>77</sup> Human rights situation in Nicaragua, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Sep. 2, 2024, pg. 10, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nicaragua/situation-human-rights-nicaragua-report-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-advance-edited-version-ahrc5720> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>78</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 24, 2025, pg. 9, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/grhe-nicaragua/a-hrc-58-26-auv-en.pdf> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>79</sup> Freedom in the World 2025 - Nicaragua, Freedom House, Feb. 26, 2025, available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/nicaragua/freedom-world/2025> (last visited Mar. 21, 2025).

<sup>80</sup> 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nicaragua, U.S. Department of State, Apr. 23, 2024, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/nicaragua/> (last visited Apr. 9, 2025).



surveillance and intelligence structure that responds to orders from the President and Vice-President. The structure is mainly composed of members of the National Army, the National Police, the Ministry of the Interior, the Nicaraguan Telecommunications and Post Institute (TELCOR), the Ministry of Health, and pro-government armed groups, and uses computer centres installed in every municipality. All public institutions are also linked to this structure through their political secretaries who identify the public officials and other persons to investigate. The Government uses this information (channelled mainly through the Centre of Police Information and Intelligence, the National Information Committee, the Financial Analysis Unit and the structure of the FSLN) to identify opponents, monitor their activities, harass or geolocate them. This structure also determines who to arrest, expel, prevent from returning or arbitrarily strip of nationality.<sup>81</sup> [...]

People under surveillance are forced to report daily – under threat of arrest – to a designated police station either in person or by sending WhatsApp messages with photos, details on their whereabouts and the people they intend to meet. The Group identified cases in which Nicaraguans continued to be harassed when abroad and pressured to send photographs from their countries of residence. This surveillance is not limited to people considered opponents; the entire population is monitored by the intelligence structure through the Ministry of Health that conducts a population census that includes questions about the location of family members and their political affiliations.<sup>82</sup>

### Economy

In its 2024 investment climate statement for Nicaragua, the U.S. Department of State reported, “Despite repression and growing poverty, Nicaragua continues to show stable macroeconomic fundamentals, including a record-high \$5 billion in foreign reserves, a sustainable debt load, and a well-capitalized banking sector.”<sup>83</sup> The U.S. Department of State also reported:

Inflation decreased to 6 percent year-on-year in December 2023. The price of a basket of typical consumer goods and services – a key measure of inflation’s impact on the general population – rose to a record high of \$540 per month in December 2023, more than double the minimum wage of \$240. The formal sector still has some 120,000 fewer jobs than its 2017 peak, and Nicaraguan families now earn 20 percent less on average in real terms than in 2017. Following an unprecedented wave of hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguan migrants emigrating to the United States in 2022 and 2023, remittances rose to a new record of \$4.7 billion

<sup>81</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 24, 2025, pg. 5, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/grhe-nicaragua/a-hrc-58-26-auv-en.pdf> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>82</sup> Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, Feb. 24, 2025, pg. 13, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/grhe-nicaragua/a-hrc-58-26-auv-en.pdf> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>83</sup> 2024 Investment Climate Statements: Nicaragua, U.S. Department of State, 2024, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-investment-climate-statements/nicaragua/> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

in 2023 – or about 30 percent of Nicaragua’s GDP – driving local consumption spending and generating significant government tax revenue.<sup>84</sup>

In its 2024 country report on Nicaragua, the private German foundation Bertelsmann Stiftung noted, “Poverty and extreme poverty rates remain very high by Western Hemisphere standards. Access to basic resources and services has and continues to be extremely skewed, with economic – and political – power concentrated in relatively few hands, despite the Sandinista Front government’s policy efforts to expand social programs.”<sup>85</sup>

In early October 2024, the World Bank Group reported that Nicaragua:

remains one of the region’s poorest countries. While trade openness has increased, Nicaragua’s exports consist mainly of low-complexity products. In addition, the country is highly vulnerable to external shocks and natural hazards. [...]

The employment rate reached 66.9 percent in the second half of 2023, close to pre-pandemic levels, due to sustained growth, lower inflation, and increased remittances. The employment rate for women (54.9 percent in June 2024) has increased in recent years but remains well below that for men (75.9). Poverty (US\$3.65/day 2017 PPP) is estimated to have declined to 12.5 percent in 2023 from 13.1 percent in 2022.<sup>86</sup>

In a mid-January 2025, International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff provided an assessment of Nicaragua’s economic performance:

The Nicaraguan economy is experiencing robust growth. Real GDP growth accelerated to around 4½ percent in 2023 and the first half of 2024, from about 3.8 percent in 2022, on the back of robust domestic demand, while inflation is moderating. Prudent macroeconomic policies and record-high remittances sustained this performance, a decrease in the estimated poverty ratio, and also led to twin surpluses, a steady decline in debt, and the accumulation of strong buffers. Gross international reserves reached US\$5.7 billion, or 7.2 months of imports, by end-October 2024. The economy remains open and resilient, after confronting multiple large shocks, and on a backdrop of transfers of private property to the state, international sanctions, and reorientation of official financing.<sup>87</sup>

## Infrastructure

<sup>84</sup> 2024 Investment Climate Statements: Nicaragua, U.S. Department of State, 2024, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-investment-climate-statements/nicaragua/> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>85</sup> BTI 2024 Country Report - Nicaragua, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2024, pg. 28, available at: [https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country\\_report\\_2024\\_NIC.pdf](https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_NIC.pdf) (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>86</sup> Nicaragua - Overview, World Bank Group, last updated Oct. 8, 2024, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

<sup>87</sup> Nicaragua - Staff Report for the 2024 Article IV Consultation, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Jan. 14, 2025, pg. 1, available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2025/02/07/Nicaragua-2024-Article-IV-Consultation-Press-Release-Staff-Report-and-Statement-by-the-561751> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

Bertelsmann Stiftung stated in its 2024 country report on Nicaragua that “the reach of infrastructure” was one of the “major challenges” which “serve as obstacles to the provision of basic services.”<sup>88</sup> The report also commented that “an expanding infrastructure network, especially with regard to the road system, has not expanded fast enough to accommodate a growing population or to connect the historically marginalized Atlantic Coast regions with the capital, Managua or the more densely populated Pacific regions more generally.”<sup>89</sup> In a travel advisory published on December 13, 2024, the U.S. Department of State reported that “Poor infrastructure can limit the Embassy’s emergency assistance to U.S. citizens.”<sup>90</sup> It also noted:

Managua has a sole private hospital that is JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) accredited and certified, with labs and radiology services available, though it has a very limited number of specialists for acute emergencies. Medical services outside Managua are limited, including for victims of crime. Government hospitals are understaffed and some hospitals throughout the country may not be able to assist in emergencies. Tap water is not reliably potable. Drink only purified bottled water.<sup>91</sup>

### Tourism

In its travel advisory published on December 13, 2024, the U.S. Department of State classified Nicaragua as “Level 3: Reconsider Travel.”<sup>92</sup> Specifically, it recommended, “Reconsider travel to Nicaragua due to arbitrary enforcement of laws, the risk of wrongful detention, and limited healthcare availability. Exercise increased caution in Nicaragua due to crime.”<sup>93</sup> The U.S. Department of State also noted that the Nicaraguan government “targets individuals and organizations for political purposes,” and, during the past year, “has subjected U.S. citizens to arbitrary entry and exit bans, expulsions, arrests, revocations of Nicaraguan citizenship, and other actions.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> BTI 2024 Country Report - Nicaragua, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2024, pg. 8, available at: [https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country\\_report\\_2024\\_NIC.pdf](https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_NIC.pdf) (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>89</sup> BTI 2024 Country Report - Nicaragua, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2024, pg. 28, available at: [https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country\\_report\\_2024\\_NIC.pdf](https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_NIC.pdf) (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>90</sup> Nicaragua Travel Advisory, U.S. Department of State, Dec. 13, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/nicaragua-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>91</sup> Nicaragua Travel Advisory, U.S. Department of State, Dec. 13, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/nicaragua-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>92</sup> Nicaragua Travel Advisory, U.S. Department of State, Dec. 13, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/nicaragua-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>93</sup> Nicaragua Travel Advisory, U.S. Department of State, Dec. 13, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/nicaragua-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).

<sup>94</sup> Nicaragua Travel Advisory, U.S. Department of State, Dec. 13, 2024, available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/nicaragua-travel-advisory.html> (last visited Mar. 19, 2025).